

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 00164 091005Z

20

ACTION EA-13

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C O N F I * D E N T I A L NOFORN SEOUL 164

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT KS

SUBJ: BACKGROUND TO ROKG EMERGENCY MEASURES

1. IN DISCUSSION WITH POLCOOUNS, PRIMIN'S SECRETARY
HAN SANG-KUK GAVE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON BACKGROUND
TO EMERGENCY MEASURES.

2. ACCORDING TO HAN, PRIME MINISTER KIM HAD BEEN
CHAIRING A DAILY SESSION OF SENIOR OFFICIALS REVIEWING
THE ROK POLITICAL SITUATION AND CONTINGENCY PLANS HAD
BEEN UNZTR CONSIDERATION FOR PAST WEEKS IN EVENT MORE
EXTREME MEASURES WE NEEDED.
HOWEVER, IT IS HAN'S IMPRESSION THAT
DECISION TO PROCEED NOW WITH EMERGENCY MEASURES WAS
MADE BY PRESIDENT PARK OVER THE WEEKEND OR ON JAN 7
ITSELF. HAN SAID PRIME MINISTER KIM HAD PLANNED
TO LEAVE FOR PUSAN LATE IN THE DAY OF JAN 7.
HOWEVER, IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON HE HAD TO CANCEL
HIS TRAVEL TO ATTEND LATE AFTERNOON BLUE HOUSE MEETING.
AFTER THAT MEETING PREPARATIONS FOR A JAN 8 ANNOUNCEMENT

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PAGE 02 SEOUL 00164 091005Z

BEGAN.

3. HAN SAID HE HAD NO DIRECT KNOWLEDGE OF PRESIDENT'S REASONS FOR ANNOUNCING EMERGENCY MEASURES NOW. HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT THAT DEFECTION OF DRP FIGURES, PARTICULARLY CHONG-KU-YONG AND PROTEST BY WRITERS (SEOUL 0078) HAD UPSET PRESIDENT. MORE GENERALLY, HAN SAID IT ALSO TRUE THAT GOVERNMENT HAD EARLIER UNDERESTIMATED MILLION PERSONS SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN AND REPORTS IN PAST WEEK HAD INDICATED GROUP WAS SUCCESSFULLY ORGANIZING ON BROADER SCALE SIGNIFICANTLY BEYOND GOVT'S EXPECTATIONS.

4. HAN THOUGHT THAT NDP DECISION TO SUPPORT MILLION PERSONS SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN HAD NOT BEEN MAJOR FACTOR PU EMERGENCY MEASURES SINCE IT CAME LATER. HOWEVER, HE SAID PRIME MINISTER WAS INCENSED BY DRP CHAIRMAN YI HYO-SAND'S JAN 4 FACETIOUS REMARK TO PRESS THAT NDP LEADER YU CHIN-SAN WAS A "SAKURA" (GOVERNMENT AGNET). YI'S REMARK HAD BEEN MADE IN JEST BUT HIT TOO CLOSE TO HOME IN ST'S CASE. PRIMIN WAS FULLY AWARE OF YU'S EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN MODERATE STANCE, DESPITE INTERNAL NDP PRESSURE. HOWEVER, HAN SAID THAT, AS A RESULT OF YI'S REMARK, THE ONE OPPOSITION LEADER WHO HAD COOPERATIVE RELATIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER HAS BEEN FORCED TO DECLARE HIS SUPPORT FOR CONSTITUTIONAL

REVISION TO PROVE HIS OPPOSITION CREDENTIALS.

5. IN DISCUSSING FUTURE, HAN SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT REALIZES IT HAS A DIFFICULT SITUATION ON ITS HANDS AND IS PREPARED TO DEAL FIRMLY WITH ITS CRITICS, INCLUDING CHRISTIANS AND STUDENTS. AS TO STUDENTS, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO USE THE PERIOD BEFORE THE SCHOOLS REOPEN TO SINGLE OUT KNOWN LEADERS AND USE A COMBINATION OF PRESSURE AND PERSUASION TO GET THEM TO ACCEPT "POLITICAL REALITIES." HE ALSO SAID THAT GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE CLEAR TO STUDENTS THAT UNLIKE SITUATION LAST SEMESTER, IT WILL DEAL FIRMLY WITH ANY ATTEMPTS TO CHALLENGE GOVERNMENT IN COMING SEMESTER.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 SEOUL 00164 091005Z

6. HAN INDICATED THAT PRESIDENT APPEARS PARTICULARLY UPSET BY INVOLVEMENT OF CHIRSTAIN LEADERS IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY. IN THE CASE OF CARDINAL KIM, GOVERNMENT HAS DISCUSSED HIS ACTIVITIS WITH PAPAL NUNCIO, POINTING OUT THAT IF THE CARDINAL CONTINUES HIS BLATANT ANTI-GOVERNMENT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, HE CANNOT BE TREATED AS AN

"EXCEPTIONAL CASE." 7

7. COMMENT: HAN WAS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN ACTIONS LEADING UP TO THE EMERGENCY MEASURES. HOWEVER, HIS COMMENTS GENERALLY CONFORM TO INFORMATION WE HAVE RECAUVED FROM OTHER SOURCES. IN THE CONVERSATION REPORTED ABOVE, HAN ALSO TRIED TO GIVE IMPRESSION THAT PRIME MINISTER CONCERNED ABOUT COURSE OF EVENTS AND MIGHT HAVE WISHED TO GIVE HIS EFFORTS AT DIALOGUE AND MODERATION A LONGER RUN. ERICSON

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